

REMARKS

Claims 1, 4 and 6-28 are all the claims pending in the application. Applicants acknowledge that claims 13-24 have been withdrawn from consideration as being drawn to a non-elected invention.

I. Claim Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

Claims 1, 4, 6-12 and 25-28 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ishikawa (JP 2001-144430) in view of Watanabe (JP 01-198094) and Shimizu (JP 2002-374062).

Claim 1, as amended, recites that the base member is provided with through holes penetrating through the non-adhesive region from the first surface of the base member to the second surface of the base member for removing the substrate from the base member.

Applicants respectfully submit that the above-noted prior art references do not teach or suggest at least this feature of claim 1.

In the Office Action, the Examiner has taken the position that the through holes 108 of Shimizu correspond to the above-noted "through holes" recited in claim 1 (see Office Action at page 3). Applicants respectfully disagree.

In particular, as shown in Fig. 1 of Shimizu, while the through holes 108 are formed in a pallet 104, Applicants note that the adhesive 16 of Shimizu is plainly depicted as covering the entire surface of the region 12 (see Fig. 1). In this regard, Applicants note that paragraph [0032] of Shimizu indicates that the adhesive 16 is sprayed on the entire surface of the region 12 in order to prevent the substrate 10 bonded to the pallet 104 from bending and from

separating from the pallet 104.

Thus, in Shimizu, because the adhesive 16 covers the entirety of the region 12, Applicants respectfully submit that the through holes 108 of Shimizu clearly do not penetrate through a non-adhesive region, but instead, penetrate through an adhesive region.

Further, as Shimizu explicitly explains why the adhesive 16 should cover the entirety of the region 12 (i.e., to prevent bending of the substrate 10 and to prevent the substrate 10 from separating from the pallet 104), Applicants respectfully submit that it would not have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to modify Shimizu such that the through holes 108 penetrate through a non-adhesive region.

Moreover, Applicants note that the through holes 108 of Shimizu are utilized solely for positioning purposes (i.e., positioning of the substrate 10 to the pallet 104). In this regard, Applicants note that claim 1 has been amended herein so as to recite that the through holes are for removing the substrate from the base member.

Thus, as the through holes 108 of Shimizu are used for positioning purposes, and are clearly not utilized in any way for removing the substrate 10 from the pallet 104, Applicants respectfully submit that Shimizu does not disclose, suggest or otherwise render obvious the above-noted feature recited in amended claim 1 which indicates that the through holes are for removing the substrate from the base member.

Further, Applicants respectfully submit that neither the Ishikawa reference nor the Watanabe reference cures the above-noted deficiencies of Shimizu.

In view of the foregoing, Applicants respectfully submit that the cited prior art

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references do not disclose, suggest or otherwise render obvious the above-noted feature recited in amended claim 1 of the base member being provided with through holes penetrating through the non-adhesive region from the first surface of the base member to the second surface of the base member for removing the substrate from the base member.

Accordingly, Applicants submit that claim 1 is patentable over the cited prior art, an indication of which is kindly requested. Claims 4, 6-12 and 25-28 depend from claim 1 and are therefore considered patentable at least by virtue of their dependency.

Regarding non-elected claims 13-24, Applicants note that each of independent claims 13, 23 and 24 has been amended so as to include all of the features recited in claim 1. Accordingly, as these claims include all of the features recited in claim 1, upon allowance of claim 1, Applicants submit that claims 13, 23 and 24 should be rejoined in accordance with MPEP § 821.04 and indicated as allowable, along with all claims that depend from claims 13, 23 and 24.

II. Conclusion

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited.

If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may best be resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,

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